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ABSTRACT

This symposium paper is concerned with curriculum theory and development and the place of curriculum theory within the area of instructional technology. It first identifies the central questions of curriculum (e.g., what should we teach?) and discusses the implications of the resulting issues: (1) why should we teach this rather than that? (2) who should have access to what knowledge? (3) what affects would accrue from the study, particularly the prolonged study, of a given domain of knowledge? and (4) how should the various parts of the curriculum be interrelated in order to create a coherent whole? The question of curriculum is examined and implications for the field of technology that might enhance the utilization of media within the instructional process are viewed. Conclusions indicate that linking the notions of curriculum and media together will suggest new ways of looking at the learning process and will provide a different language and conceptual framework for looking at the issues, problems, and concerns in the field. Ten references are listed. (LMM)

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Research and Theory Division Symposium:

Open Forum on the Foundational Issues of the Field of Instructional Technology

Philosophical Foundations and Instructional Design (Curriculum Theory)

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Philosophical Foundations
and Instructional Design
(Curriculum Theory)

Our purpose for this symposium is in keeping with last year's original proposal, i.e. to address, from a different vantage point, some major theoretical issues of our field, and to stimulate interest in these issues among members of AECT and to provide an opportunity for dialogue and discussion.

Last year my paper addressed the notion that within the field of education, researchers are faced with competing educational philosophies that reflect divergent interpretations of reality, knowledge and value. Depending upon our individual orientation toward living and our perception of the "world" (our immediate social-context), we consciously/unconsciously espouse a particular philosophy of education and act in certain ways within the classroom.

The major focus of my paper was on epistemology. I tried to develop an epistemological framework within which diverse modes of inquiry could be used to comprehend reality. I identified the implications differing modes of inquiry would have for future research within our field, specifically research of a conceptual/theoritical/philosophical nature. I tried to situate our current practice and thinking in the field within that epistemological framework, identifying the need to generate diversity in our reserach methodology.

Introduction: Situating My Discussion

This paper is concerned with curriculum theory and development, and the place of curriculum theory within the area of instructional technology. Our field utilizes the instructional design model, or the systems approach to instruction (e.g. Kemp, 1977; Banathy, 1968; Gagne and Briggs, 1975; etc.),

for organizing subject matter for instructional purposes. Hence, our field is concerned (or should be concerned) with curriculum theory and development.

Instructional design is a valid model/process to utilize for organizing curricular content. It is a very popular model. It has strong historical roots within the field of curriculum (Kliebard, 1975; Apple, 1979; Koetting, 1979). Yet it is only one model for organizing the instructional process. When we examine the notion of curriculum theory, we begin to get a broader sense of the complexity of the process of schooling.

I will develop my paper as follows: I want to identify the central question of curriculum (what should we teach?) and examine the notion of curriculum theory. I will then look at the implications for the field of instructional technology that I believe would enhance the utilization of media within the instructional process.

I chose to look at curriculum theory because, as I hope to show, it is through an analysis of curriculum theory that we begin to move toward differing philosophical viewpoints regarding schooling. This will provide a framework for viewing the instructional design model as one means of curriculum design.

Curriculum: What Should We Teach?

Kliebard (1977) has stated that the central question of curriculum is "What should we teach?" Asking this question, we are immediately faced with a series of questions/issues:

1. Why should we teach this rather than that?
2. Who should have access to what knowledge?
3. What affects would accrue from the study, particularly the prolonged study, of a given domain of knowledge?

4. How should the various parts of the curriculum be inter-related in order to create a coherent whole?

Taking the central question of curriculum (what should we teach?) and the questions we are confronted with, namely the four just mentioned, what definition/understanding of the word theory (curriculum theory), can help us come to grips with our central question?

Kliebard (1977) suggests the following meaning for the word theory:

> Any more or less systematic analysis of a set of related concepts.

The systematic analysis is an

> Attmept to clarify what may be initially vague concepts and thereby unpack the nature of the problems under consideration.

Thus, through systematic analysis, we attempt to clarify the various concepts/understandings implied in our four questions.

Examples may be helpful here. What is implied in our four questions? What are the implications, what are the hidden notions we can "unpack" from these questions?

1. Why teach this rather than that?

   We can't teach everything. We need to be selective and chose what we are to teach from a vast array of information within a given field. What will be the the basis of our choices? Utility? Relevance? Personal meaning? Survival skills'? Needs of business/industry? Is there an "accepted" curriculum/ body of knowledge for each discipline?

2. Who should have access to what knowledge?

   What criteria do we use for determining who gets what information? Probable destination of students? Social efficiency? I.Q.? Standardized testing? Vocational/ trade? Who determines what is legitimate regarding a body of knowledge?

3. What affects would accrue from the study of a given domain of knowledge?

   Does the study of mathematics encourage rational thought processes? Do certain studies "make us" better people? Do the humanities/cultural studies make us more complete human beings? What knowledge is of most worth?

4. How should the various parts of the curriculum be inter-related in order to create a coherent whole?

Schools are the only "place" where reality is isolated into disciplines of study. Why emphasize the basics? Why not organize/integrate disciplines through team teaching?

The problems we are unpacking, analyzing and trying to clarify are philosophical in nature. They are concerned with the nature of reality (ontology); the nature of knowledge (epistemology); the nature of valuing (axiology); the nature of society; the purpose of schooling; the nature of society.

If we pursue this kind of questionning, we move into neglected areas in curriculum studies for example

1. The taken-for-granted reality of schooling;
2. The conceptual emptiness of our notion of, and use of the term knowledge;
3. The position of value-neutrality regarding the process of schooling; etc.

What we end up clarifying/analyzing are our assumptions underlying our orientation to understanding "curriculum".

Implications for Instructional Technology

If I can accept the points made up to this point regarding the central question of the field of curriculum (What to teach?) and the attendant questions raised

Why teach this rather than that?
Who should have access to what knowledge?
What affects would accrue from the study of a given domain of knowledge?
How should the various parts of the curriculum be inter-related to form a coherent whole?

Then I can make the following statement:

> Teaching is essentially a philosophical endeavour and therefore educational activity can be conceived within the context of a philosophy or world-view.

Essentially we would be examining our teaching activity through a process of self-reflection based on a philosophical world-view. This is not a new idea. I think most of what we do in schools can be examined within the context of particular framewords. What I am suggesting here that is different is the choice of frameworks.

If the statement I just made on teaching can be accepted, we are led to different kinds of questions within the field of curriculum because we are using a very different kind of language, a different conceptual framework that asks different questions than we usually ask in the field of curriculum. As Giroux (1981) suggests, a different question arises:

> Whether the new language and concepts used are raising profoundly important questions and issues about the curriculum itself.

My contention is <u>yes</u>, the new language and formas of analysis will do just that, namely raise more profoundly important issues not only within the field of curriculum, but within our own field as well. We will be required to examine the disciplines of philosophy of education, sociology of education, the revisionist historian's work on public schooling; etc. This will certainly broaden our base/perceptions and help us to see the larger picture, not just the "What to teach?"

Apple (1982) has suggested that teachers today are being de-skilled in the art and craft of teaching because of the <u>form</u> curriculum has taken. At the same time, they are being re-skilled into managerial roles because of that form. The curriculum field can bring back the art and craft of teaching. Educational technology <u>can</u> provide diversity of thinking regarding curriculum and instruction. That would be curriculum theorizing.

This means that we might focus less on the specifics of instructional design, and attend more to the content of instruction and to the diversity of modes of expressing ideas for instructional purposes. This will require that we become familiar with the area of curriculum studies, and the debates, issues, problems and concerns of that area of study. For example, current curriculum literature is critical of systems management procedures used in organizing subject content (cf. Apple, 1979). These same critiques can be used in examing the instructional design model as a means of organizing the learning process. The I.D. model has a constitutive interest in controlling that process.

Control is consititutive of the model itself, the nature of the model. The instructional developer (teacher) makes all the decisions regarding the organization and planning of the learning process, and this is done usually prior to meeting students who will undergo the instruction. One primary legitimating factor for using this "scientific/systematic approach" to designing instruction is the objective nature of the results planned for. Yet, methods of inquiry have constitutive interests. Empirical methodology has an interest in control. This is verified in praxis by examining the instructional design model and progrmas that have been designed according to the model. Knowledge is predetermined, what students will "think, feel and learn" is predetermined, by someone other than the students. The major difficulty with applying a control model to the learning process is centered on questions that point toward the "non-neutrality" of education: "Whose knowledge is it? Who selected it? Why is it organized and taught in this way? To this particular group?" (Apple, 1979, p. 7). Linking these questions with the emphasis on standardization of methodology and outcomes that is characteristic of the instructional design model, and the model's emphasis on control of the learning process, any deviation from predetermined outcomes cannot be considered. Thus all students who go

through the structured learning activities of the model are expected to arrive at the same point (input-output model). I believe this is a reductionist and simplistic view of education that poses strict limitations on what is determined "legitimate knowledge," and how one arrives at legitimate knowledge.

If I focus on diverse forms/modes of rationality, I can arrive at knowledge through interpretive understanding (Verstehen) and critical science. In working with symbol systems, e.g. in analyzing the language of film, the language of video, the language of photography, visual imagery, etc., I am situated in another mode of rationality, I am looking for interpretive understanding. When these interpretations are open to critical analysis, I am situated in yet another mode of rationality, that of critical science, critical thinking and analysis. The empirical model of education does not use/recognize interpretive understanding or critical thinking as methodology. I suggest we explore alternative ways of organizing curricula that acknowledge that students are capable of having valid views of the world and at the same time recognizing that those views are open to critical analysis.

There are other models of curricula organization that we could explore. We will need to examine the literature outside of our field that is specifically concerned with curriculum development. This could be a fruitful area for future research and alternative praxis. Our research efforts will be of a theoretical/conceptual nature, and once the theory/conceptual base is clearly explicated (a legitimate research endeavor), testing the frameworks will demand varied research techniques and reporting. Definitive, generalizable conclusions regarding the "one best" curriculum organizational model will not be our research aim. However, greater understanding of the complexity of the curriculum organizational process could result and enhance our praxis.

To link the notions of curriculum and media together will suggest new ways of looking at the learning process. It will provide a different language and conceptual framework for looking at the debates, issues, problems and concerns in our field.

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